# background information

# FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY

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# Background Information

## FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY

# RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECENT ELECTIONS IN CEYLON

(from a correspondent)

Many people have been enquiring about the recent General Elections in Ceylon, especially in their effect upon the work of the Christian Church and the following are a few notes on the situation as it appears to someone on the spot.

The U.N.P. (United National Party) has been in power with an overall majority ever since Independence Day. It is essentially the party of the rich man, the capitalist, the landowner, and the people of "good family", including many of the old aristocratic Kandyan families, but also many of the newly-rich, especially the bus magnates. It has had a record of very considerable social progress. Expenditure on education and medical services have increased ten-fold since the pre-war days, and it has many accomplishments to its credit, especially in the field of irrigation and reclaiming of large tracts of jungle land, and the settlement of landless peasants. To take but one other example, much effective work has been done in public health, with the remarkable drop in death rates within the last seven years. Infant mortality from 101 to 72, and maternal mortality from 10.6 to 4.6 Its attitude towards the Christian Church has been somewhere between benevolence and tolerance: some restrictions have been placed upon the Church's educational work, but on the whole the Government has resisted the pressure of the more extreme Buddhist-nationalist groups to interfere with the Church's liberties. The U.N.P. went to the polls in April confident of victory. It had wealth, social prestige and a much stronger party organisation than any of its rivals; it had a considerable record of achievement to its credit; it had the support of all the large daily papers, and it had at its head in Sir John Kotalawala a man of integrity and leadership who, though an egoist and possessed of no outstanding ability, was not unpopular in his own land, and had done something to put Ceylon on the map in his breezy world tours, and by his outspoken utterances at Bandung. In the event, the party only retained eight of its seats in the election. Sir John and one other were the only Cabinet ministers who were able to secure re-election.

The M.E.P. (Mahajana Eksath Peramuna, which might be translated The People's United Front) came into power with 51 seats (since slightly increased by the adherence of some who were returned as Independents) out of 95 seats, giving them an overall majority. They are a mixed crew under the leadership of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The latter is the son of a strong Christian home: he went to Oxford in the twenties and returned a near-Communist. He became more moderate in his political views, and for a time held office in the first U.N.P. Cabinet. Some years ago he crossed the floor to become leader of the opposition and the founder of the Freedom Party whose programme was strongly nationalist: Ceylon for the Sinhalese, the Sinhalese language and the Buddhist religion to "have their rightful place" and the ties with Great Britain to be dissolved. (Bandaranaike gave up his Christian faith in his Communist days. Among the political leaders of Ceylon today there are many apostate Christians: some who lost their faith through Communist influence during their student days in England, and some who have changed over to Buddhism for frankly political reasons. Bandaranaike belongs to the former.). Shortly before the recent election he formed the M.E.P. by allying himself more or less closely with other splinter groups, all of which were socialist and nationalist in varying degrees.

There were two main factors in the success of the M.E.P. One was the strong distrust of the U.N.P. by the labouring, artisan and clerical workers - in other words, among the more vocal of the economically distressed. They have a deep distrust in the willingness and the ability of the capitalist bosses in the U.N.P. ever to do anything radical to bring them relief. This factor was illustrated by the way in which the old feudal Kandyan families lost their seats everywhere. In Kandy itself the successful candidate was a Government clerical servant who a few years ago was dismissed for Trade Union activities. In Colombo a Cabinet Minister, of a blameless if somewhat ineffective reputation, was defeated by an ex Post Office peon who likewise had lost his job for Trade Union activities. For the first time in Ceylon the electorate has voted for a Party (or perhaps more accurately, against a Party) instead of voting for "the big man" of the locality. In that respect the election has been a real triumph for democracy, and quite possibly the victory of the M.E.P. has saved Ceylon from a leftist revolution, because the growing unemployment among "Passed Senior School Certificate holders" is creating a discontent which would not have borne long with another U.N.P. Government.

But an even greater factor in the defeat of the U.N.P. was the influence of the Bhikshus (Buddhist Priests). For years they have been agitating for the appointment of a Government Commission to enquire into the disabilities from which Buddhist education and religion have suffered. The U.N.P. Government always refused this. In the end the Buddhist Congress conducted their own enquiry and issued a report entitled The Betrayal of Buddhism. It traced the story of the betrayal of Buddhism from early Portuguese times onwards and, not without some distortions of history, but with a solid basis of truth, demonstrated how British Colonial rule had given strong support to western and Christian education and culture to the detriment of Buddhism. Coming to modern times they inveighed against what they regarded as the Government's pro-Christian policy, and particularly against the supposed influence of the Roman Catholic Church (which is six or seven times as large as all the Protestant churches put together). The U.N.P. Government took no official notice of the Report, but the M.E.P. promptly declared that its implementation would be a part of their programme. That was decisive. The Bhikshus organised themselves into a Bhikshus United Front (in spite of the express disapproval of many of the senior High Priests) and twelve thousand monks toured the constituencies in support of the M.E.P., visiting homes and preaching in Temples and attending political meetings, all with the one text - turn out the U.N.P. Their influence proved not only decisive, but quite overwhelming.

One other group must be mentioned - the Tamil constituencies in the North and East. They were opposed to both the U.N.P. and the M.E.P., because both parties declared that Sinhalese only should be made the State Language. (This was an unprincipled volte face on the part of the U.N.P. who have always stood for parity of Sinhalese and Tamil, but who did a sudden switch over just befor the elections hoping to take the wind out of the sails of the M.E.P.) Eleven of the eighteen Tamil constituencies returned Federalists (most of the others came in as Independents) who seek separation for the Tamil area as a separate self-governing unit. They will be in opposition along with the Communists and the rump of the U.N.P. The leader of the Opposition will be the leader of the N.L.S.S.P. - a leftist party which is nominally Trotskyist, but is regarded by most people as Socialist. They won 14 seats out of the 21 they contested, and so form the largest opposition party. One of the disturbing factors in the present situation is the absence of all Tamils from the Cabinet, which is unprecedented in Ceylon politics. Another feature (perhaps less disturbing)

is the low average age of the new House: the youngest is 21, and 55 of the 95 elected M.P.'s are in Parliament for the first time. The Prime Minister is the only member of the Cabinet who has held Cabinet rank before. It is certainly a Government of the people.

It is too soon to be able to predict the policy of the new government. The first declarations of policy, partly in speeches and partly in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament have mostly concerned themselves with popular trivialities - the reduction, by subsidy, in the price of rice and sugar and so forth. It seems clear that Ceylon will become a Republic (which would be generally popular) though the Government has not committed itself on the question either of its future relation with the Commonwealth or in the matter of the Naval Base at Trincomalie. Sinhalese will be made the State language, but steps will probably be taken to see that the minority communities (especially Tamils) do not suffer anything worse than a little loss of prestige. No reference has been made as yet to religion or to education, though a Ministry of Culture has been set up which is to include Religion in its survey. But that religion, and more particularly, Christian education, will become a major issue before long is not a matter of doubt.

The Buddhist Commission's Report included many far-reaching recommendations on the matter of schools, including among them, 1) that all assisted schools be taken over by the State; 2) that teachers in schools (and in the University) should be appointed in such a way that the proportion of Christians should not be greater than the proportion of Christian scholars; 3) that Christian orphanages should not be allowed to admit any but the orphans of Christian parentage; 4) that every child attending school should receive instruction in his own religion, and so on. Other recommendations were that no place of worship could be built without Government licence, that all Social Service institutions should be taken out of the hands of religious bodies, that "in view of the depredations committed by the British Government between 1815 and 1931", the Government should pay an annual sum "as compensation" for the support of Buddhist activities.

In his election programme, Bandaranaike stated that the implementation of these recommendations (and many others in a similar vein) would be a part of his policy. Election promises are not always fulfilled, and the fact that so far nothing has been said in the Speech from the Throne makes one hopeful that the new Cabinet is at any rate going to proceed with care before taking action on these issues. The question in everyone's mind is how far the Cabinet will be under the influence of the very conservative and reactionery Bhikshus United Front which was so largely responsible for their triumph at the polls. Only time can answer that question. The Prime Minister has gone out of his way, both in the speech from the Throne and on other occasions, to assure the racial and religious minorities that "they have nothing to fear", and it may be that by pursuing an economic policy designed to bring relief to the unemployed and the underpaid, he may be able to evade the more extreme demands of the Buddhist nationalists. That is, one suspects, his own inclination: an interesting parallel is to be seen in Nehru's attitude to the Hindu Maha Sabha. Nevertheless, while the Bhikshus will probably not get all that they want, there is no doubt that Christian education will be deeply affected. The present situation whereby more than half the pupils in our schools are brought up without any religious instruction whatever is open to the gravest criticism. It has made the Church the target of constant attacks in the Buddhist press, and more and more of the Christian community are feeling unhappy about it.

It seems likely that the Government will end our dilemma for us, and in one way or another will take the education of our non-Christian pupils out of our hands. If the Bhikshus get their way, of course, the Church might be driven right out of the field of education altogether.

Another aspect of the new government's policy is to be seen in its foreig relations. A closer alliance with Nehru's policy of neutralism, and a more independent attitude towards the West, especially as represented by America, is likely to be popular. America seems to many thinking people in Ceylon to be strangely out of touch with Asian thinking, and strangely ignorant of the things that make for peace. The comment of the New York Times on the Ceylon elections was that it was "another defeat for the free world". That comes from the country which, in Ceylon thinking, is the power which has shown its reactionery policy by the support of Chiang in China, Rhee in Korea, and now Diem in Vietnam, and which is shipping armaments to Pakistan. Nehru's policy of neutralism and co-existence, based on Pancha Sila (the Five Principles) seems to many Asians at least as likely to save the peace as the Western policy of Peace through deterrents, and the western application of that policy in Cyprus and North Africa has done nothing to change that opinion.

On the whole, the Ceylon elections seem to indicate that Ceylon is conforming to the pattern of the Asian revolution, though we are achieving the revolution through the machinery of democracy. Although popular feeling never ran so high, and although the poll was unusually heavy for Ceylon, there seems to have been a complete absence of any kind of violence, and a very marked decrease in impersonation and other forms of corruption. It has been a remarkable example of an Asian people bringing about something like a revolution by peaceful democratic means. It is the will of the people, as represented by the peasant and the worker, which has triumphed over the vested interests of the rich (both Ceylonese and American) and that is a good thing: indeed it is something to be profoundly thankful for. If, inevitably, the Church finds itself less popular - well, that may not do the Church any harm.

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(Since this was written word has come of new tensions in Ceylon created by the insistence of the dominent Sinhalese group in the population that Sinhalese shall be the state language, against the protests of the Tamil minority.)

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II.

## MISS LUCY AND DESEGREGATION IN ALABAMA

(We are grateful to the Rev. Walter W. Anderson, Jr., minister to students for the Christian (Disciples) Churches of Alabama, for this account of a much publicized incident which illustrates some of the problems confronting Christians as a result of the move toward de-segregated schools in the Southern United States.)

Miss Autherine Lucy was admitted to the University of Alabama, February 1, 1956, after a three-year legal fight. After attending classes for three days during which demonstrations and riots occurred, she was suspended in the interests of her own safety and that of others on the campus. On March 1, she was expelled by the trustees of the University for unwarranted charges against the administration. A review of these events and the reactions of the Churches and student Christian Associations indicates the difficult situation confronting Christians in relation to the desegregation movement in the American South.

The registration of Miss Lucy at the University was uneventful. The students were too busy to pay much attention and objected less than the local and state community to her entering the university. The only criticism was that she dressed too well for a co-ed, arrived in a big black cadillac, and was registered ahead of other students. However, a host of photographers, newsmen, television cameramen and negro well-wishers were present, and this new coverage gave a distorted "significance" to the event in the mind of the public, and helped to create the almost hysterical atmosphere which later prevailed.

There was no incident during her attendance at class on Friday and Saturday - only coolness on the part of fellow students, and perhaps some curiosity and momentary tension, as she was escorted by a police officer. There were student demonstrations on Friday and Saturday evening. Judging from reports, the first which was said by some to have started spontaneously, was not antagonistic and was a typical example of students "letting off steam". The second, after an intercollegiate basketball game, while more antagonistic, was still not bitter. One thousand participated, but there were only a few hundred active agitators. However, those opposing Miss Lucy's entrance had taken advantage of their opportunity. There was some definite leadership, both student and non-student, and student leaders harangued the crowd. These students were known for their participation in other irresponsible activities. The most prominent one comes from a broken home and has a bitter outlook. Such activity feeds a hungry soul. Even on Sunday there was no general feeling that there would be serious trouble. My student Christian group was concerned about the whole race problem and voted to have several programs on it, even planning to have Miss Lucy speak later in the semester when calmness had returned to the campus. Our main concern was to aid in her acceptance since we did not anticipate trouble. But the publicity and demonstrations had had their effect in the community.

Monday was a day of riot and near riot. The first incident seems to have been touched off by a group of students and tough looking outsiders who were intent on creating trouble. (The outsider element was very numerous at first but at later incidents had almost disappeared except for a few who sparked the crowd or were onlookers.) They awaited Miss Lucy's entrance to her 9.00 a.m. class but she eluded the crowd which then harassed her attempt to go to the next class. Barely escaping in the Dean of Women's car, driven

by the assistant to the president, she ducked into the Education building. Stones and eggs were hurled, breaking the windows and damaging the car. By now a crowd had gathered on both sides of the street, awaiting her departure. Actually the majority of the students in the crowd were more curious than antagonistic and were seeking a diversion. Sometime around 1.pm Miss Lucy was again successful in escaping the watchful crowd. (The Episcopal Chaplain was instrumental in the escape of the owner of the car in which she had arrived at the University.)

After her departure the crowd lingered on. The Episcopal Chaplain addressed groups of students with such success that they turned on a drunken loiterer who had thrown an egg at him and made him apologize. The offender was arrested amid cheers for the police. By mid-afternoon the crowd had dispersed but tension was heavy. Traffic on the federal highway which bisects the campus had been diverted. Rumours were numerous that motorcades were to arrive from Georgia and Mississippi to "help" the University students handle the situation. Since a big basketball game was scheduled that evening everyone was expecting a big demonstration. Ministers and the administration were fearful of a general riot; the opposition boasted that this would be the biggest demonstration yet. Actually the defeat of the opposing University in basketball relieved some of the tension and the demonstration was similar to the others.

During the disturbances it was said that the state police were instructed not to arrest students. In any case there was not an adequate police force to handle the situation. The suddenness with which the Monday disturbances arose was partially responsible for this and the campus is virtually impossible to block off unless martial law is declared and troops posted everywhere.

During the late afternoon and evening (of Monday) well placed outsiders could be seen observing everything. Propaganda sheets from the White Citizens Councils of Mississippi were passed out but were not subtle enough for the average neutral student and most of them ended in a bonfire. Pro-segregationists were taking every advantage of the situation and for days had been circulating propaganda and playing recordings of supposed N.A.A.C.P. officials making statements they never made. That evening the Trustees of the University suspended Miss Lucy on the grounds of safety and a period of waiting followed which was marked by charges and counter charges by all the groups involved.

On February 29, the Federal Court in Birmingham ordered her reinstatement in ten days. On March 1, the trustees expelled her for unwarranted charges against the administration. She had accused them of not providing adequate protection and unnecessarily suspending her. Her expulsion was followed by that of a student leader who had made unwarranted attacks on the University in speeches before Citizens' Councils. He was expelled March 12, after an investigation of those students involved in the disturbances. Others were disciplined.

The first thing that should be said about these disturbances is that they caught everyone completely by surprise - everyone except many of the citizens who said that outsiders were going to cause trouble. This was largely due to their memory of the days of the Ku Klux Klan and lynching. Those of us in the situation were either too optimistic or too complacent or both. Also, there is good reason to feel that there was an element of accident about the disturbances. While we cannot be certain that the first demon-

stration was not deliberately started there is reason to believe that it was a typical student foray, started on "fraternity row" by some intoxicated students. If this is true, then those who objected to the presence of Miss Lucy used this as their opportunity to create more trouble.

Throughout the disturbances the students were in the majority in the crowds but they were not all actively agitating. While at first they did not realize the potential danger in their actions, later they did. It is stated that after some threw eggs and gravel at the president's wife, a murmur of "let's go home" swept through the crowd. Also a few students were able easily to block the steps to the president's home when the leaders of the crowd tried to enter. It should also be remembered that at the most 2,000 students participated in the demonstrations and that this is a minority in a student body of 7,000 students. Many students did not desire an integrated school but they did not approve of the disturbances which occurred. They also applauded the University president's convocation address in which he stated that if the court ordered Miss Lucy's return the University would do everything to see that law and order was maintained. It should be remembered also that the sentiments of the students are perhaps far ahead of those of the average citizen and also of elected officials.

The reaction of the Churches and Student Christian groups

Tuesday was marked by meetings of the Student Government Association and the Student Religious Association both of which passed resolutions condemning mob violence. The Tuscaloosa News carried an editorial lamenting the surrender of the University to the mob. It was sharply criticised and continued to be criticised for this but otherwise has suffered no great loss.

The action of the religious groups was not very vigorous and some abstained from taking any action. On Monday when the disturbances threatened the campus, ministers were asked by the campus radio station to make three minute tape recordings for spot playing. Several of us were ready to do so but did feel that we should act as a group. This plan was stymied by scruples on the part of some student pastors over whether the University administration had requested such action. Actually the administration had been consulted and had tried to phone the hesitant member. This project failed.

The ministers met to draft a statement to the students, again at the insistence of some and over the objection of others. A unanimously approved statement was drafted which included the following:

> In the name of our Heavenly Father we call upon all the University family to act in accordance with tolerance, with respect for fellow human beings, and with regard for law, order, peace and decency.
>
> We have a serious work to perform in showing our communities and the world that love, justice and respect are not meaningless terms but are commitments worthy of our most serious considerations and most heartfelt action.

This was also passed by the Student Religious Association. The students and ministers then turned to future action, "looking to the day when Miss Lucy will return to the campus" as one minister stated it. Due to lack of knowledge of what to do in such a situation and to the disagreement among them,

this effort also came to nothing. A proposal that they form an escort for Miss Lucy was voted down partly due to the fact that this would probably be interfering with the authorities, and partly due to the influence of the presiding pastor who said this would be "a mob in reverse" which would impose our views on the campus and which he viewed as unchristian. They then proposed to make a public statement that they welcome Miss Lucy back to the campus and that she would be welcome at the Christian student centres represented. The second part of the statement was out of order since this group could not act for the centres. The vote on the statement was 9 to 7 in favour with 3 abstentions. Since there was only a minority in favour we rescinded it. The only positive action was the proposal to hold study or prayer meetings. This was left up to the local groups, some of whom did and some of whom did not, hold meetings. Many had an existing group which could be used for this purpose others did not and decided they could not add another activity. This meeting of pastors and students was a hodge-podge of zealous advocates of extreme action and more realistic minds and those who saw no purpose or good in taking any action. In recent months it has approved a committee for a study which will prepare for action in similar situations in the future. It is the type of thing which is badly needed. Aside from the suddenness of the event, nothing hindered us so much as uncertainty as to proper action.

The ministers in town were as mild and quiet during the whole episode as the campus religious groups. Several of them made statements appealing for calmness, wisdom and prayer. The ministerial association required two meetings to draft a statement which said essentially this. Several of us preached more directly to the subject with varying degrees of reaction. Generally, those who spoke were in such a minority that we were considered "a bit odd", radical, or a "damn-yankee". Some of the reluctance to speak was due to fear of undue publicity as one leading minister told me.

In analysing this reluctance to speak or to act in the whole situation, there are several factors to take account of and several points of view to understand. First the attitude of the people and ministers and students toward the immediate circumstances - not the issues - should be seen. There was of course the disgust with the publicity and the distortion which the press so frequently gives. This disgust is both genuine and merely an escape. But more important is the fact that many people felt and still feel that the making of statements will have no constructive effects and that it is merely a part of the whole scene of excitement. Also many honestly feel that times of tension are not times to say anything controversial since people are easily inflamed. And this may be true in some instances.

There are several points of view concerning the Christian position involved. One extreme view says that segregation was ordained of God, citing the Jewish exclusiveness and the creation by God of different races. They also resort to proof-texting in the fundamentalist tradition. They refuse to apply any other principles than those mentioned above and demand segregation at all costs.

Another point of view held by those who have never really thought through the problem. They are suspending judgement until they do. This situation of not having thought the problem through is quite easy in a segregated society which does not question the situation. Many feel that everything is too confused to speak clearly on the subject. This was the statement of one student group.

Another, and perhaps the largest group, holds the view that the question is explosive and divisive, with large groups on both sides and both citing Biblical bases. Hence they say that nothing should be said in order to keep the unity of the Church and to avoid passing judgement on their fellow Christians. The predominant factor in this view is the belief that one's faith has nothing to do with changing society, that one's responsibility is to live as a Christian within the framework of the existing mores and customs. Their view is strengthened by a lesser degree of overt violence in the segregated society than in the non-segregated society. It ignores the quiet resentments and passively borne grievances and sees only the Christian and humane relations which have existed in the South alongside the unchristian and the inhumane. In accepting the views of their ancestors and failing to see the fact that they have a part to play in the changing scene, this group ignores the Christian responsibility for social institutions and structures. The typical reaction of this group is "What does that fool girl want to get herself killed for"? Their view is crystalized in the misunderstanding of the need for test cases to open the way for those who "really want an education" and by a conviction, partly true and partly false, that the source of the trouble is outside agitation. They fall prey to those who use such terms as "mongrelization" and "Communist plot to destroy the last stronghold of pure Anglo-Saxon blood". Perhaps one of the greatest reasons for this point of view, as a whole, is the failure to understand the total situation in its complexity. Thus this group easily evaluates the whole on the basis of the part they know personally, and justify their own faults by pointing to the faults of others.

Another viewpoint is that of a smaller minority of ministers and laymen who see the difficulties involved in the whole problem and who move and speak prudently, in contrast to many Northern people and many idealists. They recognise and accept fully the Christian principles involved and the implications of the fatherhood of God. They also recognise that the Christian gospel speaks to people who have a voice in guiding the transition which is taking place in the world. They may not know what the specific answers are. They lack experience and information. They are often unable to do anything specific at a given moment due to conditions and their status in their congregation and community. (It should be remembered that a majority of the people of Alabama are in churches of the congregational type of government. The minister is answerable to the will and the whim of the congregation at a moment's notice. We have found that a minister's ability to speak or to act depends upon his status with his congregation. If he is not well liked this type of situation may be just the opportunity the congregation is looking for. And the minister, in good conscience, realises that the next minister will be a pro-segregationist. Also the minister must have supplied an adequate basis in theology by his preaching and through study groups in the church.) But they do seek to find answers. Many of them have joined the Alabama Council on Human Relations, an affiliate of the Southern Regional Council which is based on the aim of equal opportunity for all and the use of fact-finding, bi-racial meetings, and carefully planned action on various points needing attention. It is a wholesome group and an effective one when it is able to function. These same ministers have held one state-wide meeting to consider what the Church should be doing. This was a valuable experience since it encouraged as well as stimulated and informed us on general conditions and specific things to do. It is hoped that this will continue and that we shall be a growing minority.

A heterogeneous group of students and faculty have organised a Human Relations Forum on the University campus and have held a debate on the question of the schools and integration. This group is at present too uncertain and

divided over its purposes to succeed. It has a high number of out-of-state people and many who merely want to do something.

We should of course mention that there are those from outside the South who are critical of the situation but who do not have the temperament to be constructive. Too frequently they only enrage a hysterical Southern mind.

Many factors enter into the complex situation and they cannot be present here, except to mention them - economic, social and cultural differences, the fact of prejudice, the political factors, and the conservative vs. the libera mind concerning change. Some industrialists are backing certain groups to help weaken organised labour. And especially important is the breakdown of communication between the two groups - Negro and white, and the presence of extremists on both sides which justifies the actions and claims of the opposing group.

The whole situation has caused a deterioration in race relations general What the permanent effects will be cannot be determined. Extremists can thri only on crisis and tension but they may also have sufficient power to stifle any liberal action. On the other hand many Christians have been aroused and have found that they must be active in the struggle. They were unprepared fo the recent crisis but they have found that God does lead in the troubled time as well as in the calm time. In the crisis they have come face to face with their faith and with themselves. They are the stronger for it.

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III.

## THE SITUATION OF SOUTHERN ITALY AS A HUMAN AND A RELIGIOUS PROBLEM

by Mario Miegge

(This is the concluding section of a paper on the Problems of the Under-developed Areas of Southern Italy, written for the Department on Church and Society. Mr. Miegge is a theological student in the Waldensian Theological Faculty in Rome and was a Youth delegate to the Evanston Assembly where he participated in the section on Social Questions.)

The situation obtaining in the South of Italy, is due to two factors: 1) The inheritance of errors and misfortunes of the past, and 2) The present aggravation of the problems of the Southern masses due to the continuous increase in the population, which has not been offset by an adequate renovation of the economic and social structures. If new ways are not found in the coming years to solve the situation, a crisis will be inevitable. And this will bring about a crisis not only in the South of Italy, but in the whole country, and the repercussion of this crisis may be very serious for the future equilibrium in Europe.

In the winter of 1956, six years after the initial activity of the Southern Fund for economic development and of Land Reform, there has been a recrudescence of popular agitation in the South: at Venosa, Partinico, Enna and many other Sicilian localities, the demonstrations of the unemployed peasants ended in police repression, and there were some casualties. The official Vatican journal "Osservatore Romano" took a rather critical view of the persistently static situation in the social structure of the South. That this is not solely an economic problem is proved both by the continued influence of the leftist parties in the areas where the Reform has been implemented - a persistence which points to a lack of confidence in the methods so far pursued by the State.

From 1953 to 1955, the Federation of Labourers in the South, "Federbraccianti", a trade union which covers all wage-earning farmers, showed an increase in membership of 71,799 units; 29,610 in Sicily and 20,299 in Apulia. Radicalism among the farming masses of the South is not at present such an important factor as seriously to alter the political trend of the country; though it points to an important reality, i.e. a progressive grasp on political consciousness on the part of a very vast stratum of the Southern population which up to a few years ago, was totally estranged from the political life of the country, as a result of retrograde living conditions. This political consciousness is mostly manifest as opposition to the internal policy pursued in Italy from 1948 to 1955, which reached its climax in the "tough" attitude taken by the Scelba Government some aspects of which have been banned by the present Segni Government.

Will the new Southern political forces, which are making their first appearance on the political scene be accepted as an essential element of the country's political life, or will they be cast back by the persistence of a paternlistic policy which is too closely bound both to the pedagogic and the organised tradition of the Roman Catholic Church? Should this last possibility actually materialise, a further strengthening of the Southern extreme leftist party would not be astounding.

But Southern Italy is not only a world oppressed by economic and social problems, it is a world in which suffering and illiterate masses are acquiring political and class consciousness. It is also a world in which exceptional religious unrest is manifest to a much greater extent than in the North of Italy.

The growing objection to an antiquated social system and to a policy of paternalism very often goes together with a rejection of religious conformism which has dominated the South for centuries.

The Southern writer, Rocco Scotellaro, who died recently, has left a series of biographical descriptions of the "Farm Labourers of the South". It is symptomatic that one of the nine characters chosen as especially representative of the Southern situation, is an "Evangelical" from Lucania, a farm labourer and a member of the Baptist Church. All Italian Evangelical churches have experienced a revival in the South.

The very small increase in the number of official Evangelical churches (Waldensian, Methodist and Baptist connected with the Federal Council of the Italian Evangelical Churches) is far exceeded by the development of more or less sectarian congregational movements. Amongst the latter, special attention

should be given to the "Assemblies of God", and the "Pentocostal Movement" which arose some 10 to 20 years ago in Italy, and particularly in the South, through a group of anonymous emigrants who returned to their mother-country after a long stay in the United States. This movement was seriously persecuted by Fascism which condemned it as "contrary to moral behaviour". The Pentecostal community, however, flourished after the war.

The "Directory of the Assemblies of God" recently published in Rome, offers the following notes on the groups that have adhered to a Congress held at Catania in September 1955. There are well over 399 groups, 365 of which belong to the South of Italy, and only 34 to the Center-North. The figure is rather striking, if it is considered that after more than 70 years of evangelisation the Waldensian Church has only 37 churches and groups of faithful in the South. On the other hand, the Pentecost Movement appears to be a spontaneous movement characterised by the absence of organisation and of systematic aid from foreign missions, and by its strength among the lower classes of the population.

Like all sectarian movements, its future is uncertain, though it is probable that since the times of the heretic movements in the Middle Ages, the South has not experienced such a vast process of religious revival outside the sphere of the Roman Church.

An the attention with which the Italian Communist Party follows this phenomenon is not astonishing, as the Party perceives a parallel between a religious movement and the process of class-conflict, and trusts that the non conformist forces of sectarian Evangelism may become channeled in the leftist organisations.

The daily Communist paper "L'Unità" of 29th January 1956, published a letter addressed to the paper by a group of Sicilian Pentecost followers: "We, uneducated and illiterate people are descended from those of our country men who returned from America where they learnt the Truth through a knowledge of the Bible of our Lord Jesus Christ. The priests frighten us and threaten to cast us out of our country. We are labourers and we buy our bread and provide for our children and wives with the sweat of our brow. What evil do we do, if we believe in God as Jesus Christ told us to?" The Communist paper had no difficulty in making the best of the heart-rending protest of the "Evangelicals". With the slightly ironic sympathy suitable for honest workers that are "backward in ideological formation", Concetto Marchesi, a University Professor, replied to the Pentecostal group that the intolerance of the clergy was not due to religious reasons, but was part and parcel of a general plan of strife devised by the rich against the poor, by the exploiters against the exploited: the Sicilian priests and the Protestant American capitalists were united in the world conflict against the proletariat. The appeal of the Pentecostal group to America, where the latter had obtained knowledge of the Bible, was therefore useless. The only solution to their anguish was to become militant in the proletarian party which, when it reached power, would grant freedom of thought to all.

It is not mentioned whether the Sicilian Pentecostal group was satisfied with the rather gross and demagogic reply by the Communist writer. It must indeed be mentioned that the movement of religious revival tends to separate the "Evangelicals" from right and left political extremes: "protestant" consciousness leads to an independent opinion and to a sense of responsibility

which inadequately adapts itself to totalitarian systems and to political propaganda. And we could quote many cases to confirm this from the experiences of our churches during recent years. But in the matter of sectarian movements, the hazards of deviation are certainly greater than in the Church. What will be the attitude of the second generation of Christians? Is there not the risk that the categoric profession of faith of the present Pentecost members may become secondary to a social protest or be diverted by political propaganda?

For us, here lies the problem of the South in general, and the problem of Christian Action and Evangelism in particular.

Today the South is anxious for renovation: it demands economic transformation, it demands social and political change. But there are also those who recognise the necessity of a religious reformation which we as Christians believe is all important. And if the demands for social reform are greeted with scepticism and fear in those quarters which bear responsibility for the present situations of the country, the demand for a religious revival is answered with disdain and manifest intolerance by the Roman Catholic majority and with demagogic subtlety by the leftist opposition.

We Italian protestants, Waldensians, Methodists and Baptists, who cannot approve of religious intolerance practised against those who proclaim the same God as we do and cannot accept the siren song of the leftist party, we who are against both the Roman Catholic integralism and Communist propaganda, consider the events in the South with anxiety. Will there be churches capable of comprehending the intricate problems of the South of Italy, able to share in the movement of revival, so that the Truth, the Truth that is not to be confused with party politics, is witnessed in the face of the urgent need for Truth experienced by the Southern multitudes?

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IV.

## DE-STALINIZATION IN THE SOVIET UNION

by André Philip

(Professor André Philip, a leading Christian layman from France, has recently visited Russia as a member of an official delegation from the French Socialist party. During his stay in Moscow he was invited to speak to the faculty and students of the University of Moscow on French political traditions and ideas. Enormous posters advertised this lecture by a true "Menshevik" something not seen in Russia for more than 30 years. Professor Philip has recorded his impressions of Russia in an article in the French Protestant newspaper Reformé which is translated and republished here.)

For the first time it has become possible to establish contacts between the two opposing worlds. During our visit we have had the possibility of seeing what we wished, of establishing direct contact with the people, of posing indiscreet questions to the highest administrative authorities, of engaging in discussions sometimes heated with the most powerful men of the Government, and finally of speaking publicly to workers and to students and to make known to them the view points of the West. In this article I would like to draw attention both to the fundamental divergences which remain in the theoretical domain and on to the probable meaning of the changes which are in the process of taking place.

### I. Fundamental Divergences

#### 1. Marxist philosophy remains incompatible with religion

In the religious field I had the opportunity to meet with the President of the Russian Baptist Church and to discuss the problem with the members of the central committee. The Baptist Church is making progress at the present time in the U.S.S.R. It has grown from 100,000 members in 1917 to 550,000 today, and each year it adds to its numbers 10 - 12,000 new adherents. It is undertaking presently a third edition of the Bible and the publication of a bi-monthly newspaper. In Moscow, there is only one church for a community of 5,000 members. There is a worship service held here twice on Sundays as well as on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday evenings at 7 o'clock. The day when I visited the President of the Baptist Church I left him at 5.30 and the church was already half full.

Protestants have complete freedom of worship, a freedom which they did not have before the Revolution when the monopoly of the Orthodox Church was imposed. But they do not have the means outside of the family to assure the religious instruction of children. They are not able to have either sunday schools or editions of religious books especially for children. The possibility exists for the training of pastors but the Baptist Church does not utilise it because it recruits its preachers among the laity and assures their training in the heart of the religious community itself.

The Orthodox Church still possesses a number of convents and schools for the training of priests. It seems to have considerable resources, derived from both the giving of its members and from the sale of candles. I was not able to make an exact count of the churches which remain open in Moscow. There seem to be relatively few and these are almost always crowded. While we were discussing religious questions with Khrouchtchev he said to us "Religious liberty exists everywhere in the Soviet Union. You have only to ask

my friend the Patriarch, when you go to the Cathedral this evening, which is the day of the Orthodox Easter; but go very early because there I would not be able to help you get in. The Cathedral is an example of integral democracy: those who come first get the first places."

If the principle of religious liberty is recognised in the exercise of cultural functions, and even if the official anti-religious propaganda is played down (everywhere I asked to visit an anti-religious museum, it was stated that it was being repaired), the doctrinal position remains completely unchanged: religion is a private affair for the State but not for the Party. The Party is officially atheist, although as Khrouchtchev recognised: "many of the members, especially the intellectuals are atheists in the conferences of the Party and religious in their families". Marxist philosophy and a religion, whatever it may be, are absolutely incompatible and historical materialism is taught to all children. Religion is therefore tolerated as an old reflex of the adult. It is hoped that it will be eliminated among the children, especially by the teaching of the natural sciences. Since the Party dominates in fact all political life, anyone who makes a profession of the Christian faith renounces by that fact all political influence in his country. This does not prevent him from rising to a position, often important, in the field of technical administration, but it remains nevertheless a subordinate position of a second class citizen.

2. Education is only utilitarian

In the field of public education the Soviet Union has made a prodigous effort. Starting from a nation almost entirely illiterate, the Government has expanded the school system as much in the primary as in the secondary, and above all in the technical fields. Desirous above all to raise the economic level of production, the Govenment has concentrated considerable sums on professional training and the whole school system aims essentially at producing specialists, technicians and scientists. Half of the students at the University of Moscow are sons of civil servants. While military service is three years, and five years for certain pupils, university students are totally exempted. They receive a simple military training during their studies at the university, following which they are placed in the reserves, the humanity students as simple soldiers and the technicians as sub-lieutenants.

We are therefore confronting a determined effort to develop a body of executives and technicians in which the Soviet Union will exceed from now on all the Western European countries together and attain at least a level of training comparable to that of the United States.

This technical civilisation brings with it disadvantages. One meets in each field eminent specialists who, however, know absolutely nothing outside of their own speciality, and in the cultural field, the propaganda element has played up until now a decisive role. We met students who spoke French remarkably well and they presented for us in a talented way, various scenes from Molière. Questioned on their study of French literature, they spoke to us about such great contemporary French writers as Aragon, Georges Cogniot, André Stil and Lafitte. But André Gide, Claudel, Camus and St. Exupéry were totally unknown to them. As for education in the field of political economy, it is based solely on Marxist-Leninism and consists essentially of an accumulation of citations from these two masters. (In the conversations which we had, I often thought of Molière and the declarations of Diafoirus: "Hippocrates said that ....")

In fact, in the Soviet school system one confronts an extremely highly developed clericalism. A dogma is imposed on all children and the method of reasoning which is inculcated has only very little relation with that which we consider logical reasoning. It is clear that this system does not give satisfaction. The students find their courses deadly boring; they are moving away more and more from official doctrines; some sink into a general scepticism searching for compensation in the development of their speciality; others begin to express their discontent; forbidden reading circulates under cover. But this is difficult because of the organised espionage in the universities by members of the Party. It seems that on this point appreciable modifications may be in preparation.

3. The system of justice does not offer indispensible guarantees

In the field of law we are equally confronted with profound transformations but which at least for the moment do not touch on the essential principles. From our discussions with the Attorney-General and the President of the Supreme Court it appeared that a new penal code is presently in preparation. This code will finally organise the legal profession, permitting the attorney to assist his client from the beginning of his trial. The laws on economic espionage are no longer being applied (although it is not possible to find in Moscow either a time-table for the trains, or a plan of the city or a telephone book). The principle of analogy by which the judge has been able to condemn for a crime not effectively foreseen in the Penal Code has been abandoned and the new Code will be based on the principle of all law "nulla poena sine lege". Administrative tribunals condemning in secret have been eliminated, their decisions are today submitted to the review of the Supreme Court. The regime of these concentration camps which are known as "corrective labour camps" has been ameliorated and we were assured that they would all be eliminated within the next eighteen months at the most. Nevertheless, the ethic of the lawyer implies that he must be an auxiliary of the law and that he must not plead "not guilty" if he believes himself in the guilt of his client. He is only able to draw the attention of the judge to attenuating circumstances. The Procurer is charged to enforce the law and is able under this sanction to intervene in every field. The examining magistrate, who is in reality a policeman, is placed under the public prosecutor. It appears that the new penal code while giving to the examining magistrate a greater autonomy will keep him nevertheless under the control of the prosecutor. Finally, the irremovability of judges is not recognised. The magistrates in various degrees are elected and can be revoked by the local, regional or republican Soviet. That is to say that the judges can be changed according to the needs of the situation. It suffices to say that in Georgia almost all the magistrates whom I met had been in office only two years, that is to say, since the moment when the team of Beria had been eliminated and replaced by another.

We are therefore not dealing with a judiciary organism which gives the individual indispensable guarantees. The very notion of law is different from our own. In the Soviet Union there is obviously no belief whatsoever of natural rights, nor in the idea of spontaneous civil rights; the only right is the positive right created by the all-powerful state, a doctrine which does not come from Marx but from Hegel.

4. The basic principles remain unchanged

In the course of our discussion with the Presidium of the Central Committee it was not concealed that the fundamental principles of Marxist-Leninism remain unchanged. Khrouchtchev said to us: "You are not going to convert us. Stalin was a great man despite his abominable shortcomings. Today, new men criticise and correct his methods but not his doctrine. Stupidities and grave crimes were committed, but the general basis of action was healthy". This implies certain attitudes.

a) Chepilov (the new Foreign Minister) defined for us the conception of real democracy, as it exists in the Soviet Union: "Thanks to the collective ownership of the means of production the people today control all material goods and therefore all moral values .... You have said to us that the right of the individual to express a different opinion from the government is the supreme test of liberty; that is true in the bourgeois states where the people and the government are opposed forces. With us why would the opinion of the individual be different from that of the government? All that we possess belongs to us all. We are a government of the people; the situation cannot exist where the opinion of the people may be different from that of the government. It is possible that some individuals may not be in agreement on certain things; that is a private affair for each citizen. We do not ask each citizen to be communist; all individuals are able to have any opinion whatever as long as they do not express it publicly and do not organise people to struggle against the power of the state".

b) The basis of the authority of this government is its comprehension of the laws of history. Khroutchev, speaking of the socialists imprisoned in the Soviet Union and in the Peoples' Democracies (he nevertheless promised us to intervene for their liberation), said, "These men are perhaps innocent but perhaps also they sought to organise people to struggle against the state. However, it is a right for any state to defend itself by all means against the forces which tend to undermine the regime". And he declared again: "History has its own laws and it punishes cruelly those who do not understand them". We are therefore confronted by a system difficult to comprehend from the standpoint of our Western mentality. There exists the laws of history which express themselves by certain dogmas; a privileged clergy have the sole access to understanding these dogmas. The Party is a religious order for which the recruitment is made with care in order to secure only the elite of the nation. This Party alone exercises power, because it alone has the knowledge of the laws of history. Its power is without limit because it is impossible for an individual who does not understand the laws of history to have a different opinion from that of the Party. And this privileged group takes the responsibility for the ignorant masses for which it tries to assure the economic, social and intellectual uplift. We are confronted by the most refined form of clericalism, a disciplined and fanatical religious order assuring power for the good of all and being able alone to attain this good as it alone has knowledge of the laws of history.

. That which has changed

In this unchangeable framework there is being produced nevertheless at the present time a profound transformation. We have encountered three different types of communists:

1. There are first of all the puritans of the system, the fanatical members of the new church. They are convinced of the absolute truth of their doctrin They would in good conscience destroy those who do not share their opinion; they impose at the same time on themselves a severe discipline in their personal life which is entirely a life of sacrifice. Their slogan is "Work, Family, Country", all that being subordinated to the supreme value which is the Party.

2. We met many people who affirm the same doctrines but with a clearly diminished faith. A member of the young Communists said to us: "The Komsomo (communist youth groups) are a little like your Boy Scouts; we engage in sports, we go on trips in the country, we dance with the girls. There are perhaps 1% who have been "bitten" who follow the courses in Marxism-Leninism because they wish to make a career in the Party, but the great majority among us don't give a damn". It is necessary to realise that among the minority of the fanatics there is presently a very grave moral crisis. Their faith had been built upon a belief in the scientific infallibility and the ubiquitous presence of Stalin. The debunking of Stalin has destroyed for some of them their very reason for living.

3. But the great majority seem to be constituted of the technicians and specialists who are truly the result of this regime. These have acquired, thanks to the schools, a professional knowledge which permits them to make a valid place in society. They become engineers and directors and are able to realise their dream of organisation and of production without being interrupte as in our countries by employer-worker committees and labour unions. The technician is therefore faithful to the regime which gives him the possibility of his own realisation but he is more and more disinterested in the doctrine to which he gives a purely conventional allegiance. What interests him is to produce with the hope that this production will finally help to ameliorate the future condition of the masses. Curiously, this type of man resembles more and more the average American who evaluates everything in terms of productivity.

The transformation which is presently coming about seems to me to be the consequence of this situation. New social classes are being born: the techni cian, the specialist, the military, the civil servant, each of these classes has precise group interests which lead it to reject the terror which under Stalin weighed upon it, and which leads it also to reject the police domination and even the control of the Party. The policy of Khrouchtchev seems to me an effort to maintain the domination of the Party by reconciling it with the masses which Stalin had aroused against himself. As for the technicians, Khrouchtchev is a realist who wishes to obtain results. When we criticised Lyssenko and his Mitchourian dogmatism, Khrouchtchev replied: "How right you are! Lyssenko is an impossible person, a sectarian, an authoritarian, narrow-minded and dogmatic. But he is our best agronomist and I prefer a bad character who produces wheat to a good character who does not produce it."

The Government is assured by the collective direction of the Presidium of the Party in the heart of which all members are equal. Without doubt, Khrouchtchev is a little more equal than the others, but he takes the advice of all and seeks to insure in the Presidium the representation of all the different social groups in order that the antagonism of interests and the necessary mediation is made in the heart of the Party itself. It is certain that all that implies very profound transformation. These changes have only

started but the beginning of liberation has been greeted in all parts of the country by such relief and such enthusiasm that the Khrouchtchev team feels itself encouraged to pursue this way. It will certainly encounter enormous difficulties. It seems that the present situation may only be one of transition. To the extent which practice is transformed the problem of transforming doctrine will pose itself sooner or later. We do not know when that will happen: whether the changes in practice will be stopped in order to safeguard the doctrine with a falling back into a situation analogous to that of Stalin, or whether, on the contrary, there will be an accentuation of the transformation which would end this time in changing the basis of the country's structure. For the moment we are still faced by the dictatorship of the Party and its all-powerful leaders, but it is a paternalistic despotism which seeks by consultative methods to associate more and more the mass of the people with its decisions. The day when the masses begin to make their voice heard the problem of individual liberties can no longer be evaded.

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V.

## QUESTIONS FROM CHINA

by Prof. Paul Ricoeur

(This article by Professor Ricoeur is translated from the French periodical Christianisme Sociale (May-June, 1956). Professor Ricoeur is professor of Philosophy at the University of Strasbourg and one of the well-known young Christian scholars in France. This article is based on his visit to China last fall.)

I would like to draw out from the impressions and observations which I was able to gather last autumn in the course of a trip to China some questions posed by the Chinese Revolution. China is now a question which is posed to all men, a challenge perhaps also, but certainly a question. The old China did not pose any question to the world but China has now re-entered history and like the Sphinx it says to us "Reply, or you will be eaten".

### I.

The first question is the easiest to resolve. It is this: does there exist for China itself a real alternative to the present regime? It seems to me that it is necessary to reply very clearly in the negative to this question in order to have the right to put other questions. The Chinese experience is of such a character that it is only from the inside, from the very unfolding of the work being undertaken that forces can come which will be capable of determining its ultimate course. To say that there is no other choice for China, that it has passed beyond any alternative, is not only to recognize a fact, it is also to understand it and to draw its consequences.

1. There is no alternative for China, because in underdeveloped countries the party which has taken the initiative and direction of agrarian reform and

industrialisation holds in its hands the key to success. And the revolution which it has unleashed has henceforth the character of a liberation. Whatever may be the reservations which one may have on the political means employe the results for the masses of the people leave little doubt that Chinese socialism is in process of resolving the fundamental problems which no one had resolved before, nor correctly posed. Only the party or the movement which put as the first priority the socialist transformation of the feudal agrarian regime and joined to it a plan of industrialisation was able to bring about changes in China, was able to set in motion something irreversible and to bring China into the modern world. The Chinese communist party has made this choice for China. It is for this fundamental reason that its grasp on the country cannot be contested today by any healthy political force.

To understand the irresistible and the irreversible character of the Chinese revolution it is necessary to have in mind the character of the feudal period..... Feudalism in China represented almost pure parasitism..... It is of little importance therefore that the Communist propaganda exaggerates the exactions of the landlords and the question is not whether they were personally good or bad, the question is that the system as it was constituted was an archiac phenomenon from the economic point of view, a dispoiler from the social point of view, and a cause of despair from the spiritual point of view. The party which broke the back of feudalism has liberated five hundred millions of Chinese not only on the economic and social level but also on the spiritual level. Henceforth the peasant has a future. He is coming out of the circle of fatality and he is moving ahead on the straight line of progress. He expects something, he has new needs which can be cultural needs and not merely physical well-being.

2. A second reason which makes of this revolution an event henceforth irreversible is the pedagogical cleverness with which it is conducted. The Chinese revolution has not known the phase of war communism which preceded planning in the Soviet Union. It seems to have avoided the rigours of forced collectivisation which provoked such a great resistance among the Russian peasants. This pedagogical emphasis is expressed in the succession and in the ordering of the phases of the agrarian revolution. The re-distribution of the land which came before the cooperative has attached the peasant to the revolution and to the regime. In making the farmer a small landholder, the re-distribution has had above all a human and a psychological significance..... The master peasant and the owner of that land which he had cultivated for another for centuries, has become the soldier of liberation. The revolution is his liberation. It is on this preliminary appropriation of the land that the socialism of the cooperatives is grafted..... Thus the peasant enters unconsciously into socialism. At no moment, does socialism seem to him as a foreign element against which he might pose another alternative. Socialism never appears to him as the result of a brutal alternative. Socialism is the direction in which China is evolving. It is the law of development of China itself.

It is the same pedagogical feeling which governs the transformation of capitalist industry. While the agrarian socialism is without indulgence for the old landed proprietors, the industrial socialism is full of indulgence for the "national capitalist". He is incorporated in the Plan. He works for the market controlled by the state; he remains owner of his capital but all new capital is injected by the state into his enterprise which progressively leaves the status of free enterprise for that of a mixed enterprise. Thus capitalism is digested without suffering, without it being able to constitute a rival for

The financial power of the great business families of Song, Chang, Chen, has been broken. Foreign capitalism has been put out of the running, national capitalism thus separated from its double connection, slowly moves in the tide of socialism, before being swallowed up, without recourse.

It is this whole pedagogy of Chinese socialism which aids an authoritarian revolution to become a reality with the characteristics of a voluntary revolution. Without doubt, and no one can deny it, this "liberation" is achieved by force, but this force is continuously converted to persuasion, then into spontaneity by innumerable procedures of "explanation" of which the regime makes use, newspapers, conferences, study circles, reunions by district, by age, by professions, by sex. But this pressure of all kinds acts in the same direction as "mutual profit", the first axiom of cooperation. Pressure does not explain everything. It does not explain that which is irresistible in this revolution, a peasant revolution above all. Pressure plays a double role of suppressing obstacles and of acceleration.

Will this pedagogy be baffled by the acceleration which at the present time is taking hold of the Chinese revolution? Will this acceleration excite the resistance which for the first time would give a serious basis to a possible opposition? It is not possible to say yet. One is able, nevertheless, to foresee with some assurance that the "cadres" will manage to "explain" this acceleration and to make it acceptable, even to be wished for and demanded by the masses.

Not only has the regime the means through force and persuasion to make its line acceptable, but this line is apparently the only possible one. In effect, it is very necessary that production grows at a sufficient rate, more than 5% per year, if it is to confront simultaneously the demographic tide (12 million new births per year), the deficiency of nourishment inherited from the past, the great works of dam building and irrigation, industrial investment, export, transport, school building, administrative expenses and cultural work. But in the "pre-mechanisation" phase before the tractor, it is principly the organisation, that is to say, cooperation itself, which can raise the level of production. In most cases the cooperatives in fact have been a good tool of development and it is therefore on the acceleration of collectivisation that all the burden of augmenting the level of living rests. That will be "explained" and without doubt understood and accepted "spontaneously", because it is not only the right way, but without doubt the only way possible for Chinese socialism.

We are therefore confronted by an event which is enormous, rational, and unimpeachable. An event which does not seem to have room for anything else.

From this "necessity" which seems to attach itself to the Chinese revolution it is necessary to draw at least two consequences. The first is that Chang-kai-chek no longer represents anything, or more exactly, he represents only an external menace of a military kind, a menace of destruction and war. He is no longer able to reconcile his own hopes with the healthy forces in the Chinese people.

For good or for evil, his strength is able to be found only in the rejected feudal class and in the "clients" of this feudal group. The success of the agrarian reform and the pedagogy of cooperation have stolen from him the healthy popular basis of a possible counter-revolution directed by the Kuomingtang.

The stand has been taken and there is no going back.

The second consequence: it is very necessary that the West in its turn draw the consequences from this brutal and massive fact and recognise the government of Mao Tsé-Toung as the government, in fact and in law, of all China. The real chances for another way no longer exist.

II.

This said, is everything necessary, is there no alternative to anything in the Chinese revolution? I do not believe this. That which appears necessary to me is the socialist character of the revolution: the cooperative or nothing. Such seems to me to be the most important lesson of China. But I would distinguish from the economic and social structure of the regime, the political power structure which stimulates and animates the revolution. Here I have a question. In order to make cooperatives, dams, heavy industry, in order to give to the people a popular culture, is it necessary to go the way of "dictatorship of the proletariat", by the one party camouflaged or not under the guise of a national united front? Is it necessary to indoctrinate the whole people in Marxism-Leninism, presented as a science, as the true science of human relations, of social dynamics and of historical development? Is it necessary to push this ideological rigour as far as this spirit of orthodoxy which makes use of criticism and self-criticism as a means by which to make the least important participant "acknowledge" the official truth?

This question is no longer the question of the Chinese. For them, the alternative is past history. This question is for others. It is a question for us. For China is henceforth not only a fact but a question posed to the whole of the underdeveloped countries, to India first, to Indonesia, to the Arab world, from the Middle East to Morocco, to Tropical Africa, to South America, to the peasant and underdeveloped Europe of the periphery of the Mediterranean. If China succeeds in overcoming its poverty, in industrialising itself, in educating itself, it will exercise on the whole underdeveloped world and principally upon the ex-colonial countries, an attraction without doubt superior to that of the Soviet Union, mainly because of its own former conditions as a semi-colonial country; but this attraction will be at the same time a question mark; is socialism this or nothing? Can there be a socialism equally valid built on another basis and with other political means?

It seems to me that the true question which is posed to us by the socialism of the Soviet and Chinese type is not the problem of the Kholkhoze, of the cooperative which seems to me the only solution of the future for the great mass of underdeveloped countries but the problem of power in the socialist regime. Does socialism imply the dictatorship of the proletariat with the same necessity as the economy of the underdeveloped countries implies socialism? In a word, it is the problem of the relation of planning to dictatorship China allows us to raise this question in all its acuteness.

It is not by the constitutional texts of the Popular Republic of China that one must gauge the extent of the dictatorship but by everyday life. The Constitution defines only the legal forms in which power is exercised. Thus the Communist Party is not mentioned a single time in the articles of the Constitution. It is only cited in the preamble as the animator of the national united front and as the guide of the new state. Nor are there any laws which regulate the relationships of the Communist Party with other parties and movements, of which there are nearly thirty which theoretically have the majority

within the national united front and even in the popular National Assembly in which the united power of the state officially resides. It is therefore necessary to look for the mechanism of dictatorship outside the text. The traveller who passes a month in China is only able to gather some indications and to try with prudence and caution to coordinate with the most reliable evidences of the migrants, and of those who have been expelled, in particular the priests, and others expelled after 1950, often after several years of prison. But the traveller who has not seen much of the exercise of power risks alternatively to be the dupe of the seductive appearances of a regime where everything is "explained" endlessly, where one goes from "conference" to "conference"; or to be the dupe of the resentment of the emigrés who have lived alongside the revolution without noticing its profound human significance and even through the violence not comprehending the final liberating effects for the great masses of the Chinese.

I would venture to hold as probable the following two or three facts: The powers of the administration not being defined in law, are practically unlimited and this leaves to the central power, to its local representatives and to the police a power without a counterweight and without recourse. No "habaeus corpus" protects the Chinese citizen against the arbitrary. That appears in the very style of the purges in China, that of the Catholic clergy for example, and that of the dissident intellectuals. The regime arranges always to make it appear that the condemnation which it has decided to make against a group, a movement or a personality, is a "spontaneous reflex of the defence of the masses". The method consists of generating a "contradiction" in the very heart of the suspects and to develop it through a "struggle"; the people demanding the punishment of the guilty; then having sanctioned by an administrative action this punishment demanded by the people.

It is thus that the regime proceeded to struggle with the Catholics. It stirs up or arouses internal "contradictions" in the life of the Churches, contradictions between patriotic duty and obedience to the Vatican, or between the class struggle and Christian charity. It leads them to confess these contradictions, in such a way as to transform them into a struggle and to blot out that which is non-Marxist in Christianity as in all other ideologies. The serious fact is that this procedure of contradiction, of confession, of struggles, then of voluntary extirpation or of punishment has no legal basis and leaves the citizen without recourse.

The same thing happened with the writer, Hu Feng, a member of the Communist Party for eighteen years, who had dared to accuse the controllers of Chinese literature of tyranny. He also was driven to recognise some contradictions which possessed him, to confess that he had remained an "idealist", "subjectivist", "formalist", but his confession was judged insincere. There were published in the Peoples' Newspaper and in all Chinese newspapers letters of Hu Feng to his friends which revealed that he was not only a deviationist but had been for a long time a counter-revolutionary traitor. A "spontaneous" movement of writers angrily demanded his degradation and his arrest, and all the Chinese intelligentsia gave themselves over to self-criticism to discover and to expurgate from their midst all traces of "Hu Fengism".

The persecution of the Christians and the purging of the intellectuals are only the gravest symptoms of a general situation which is characterized by the total grasp of the state on the life of the individual.

It is necessary to understand this in the perspective of Marxism-Leninism Politics is everything. The concrete synthesis of existence, all human activity is swallowed up by it. It is not possible to have a soul divided between the state and something else - the state and art, the state and religion, the state and private life. This is the real reason for the struggle between religious ideology; (or artistic, or literary ideologies) and the state. They really endanger socialism itself. What they challenge is the primacy and the exclusivism of politics and of the state in human existence. The state in fact is not philosophically neutral, it has a philosophy, it is a philosopher and a materialistic philosopher. It has a conception of the world of man, of history and of truth. In this sense, it fulfils the platonic idea of the stat The state does not come out of a discussion, but from knowing. It is epistêmê techné, arétê - science, competence, virtue. Like the doctor to whom Socrates in Plato's Dialogues always compared the true statecraft as distinct from the vacillating and variable sophist, it knows, it cares for, and it corrects. Even if it does violence to the patient, because the patient does not know what is good for him; what is for him subjectively agreeable is not the true measure of his health. The task of the state is to bring about truth, competence and virtue in the whole body of the nation. From this arises this multitude of reunions, conferences and explanations, and the re-education of teachers, the meetings for public confessions, the confessions of intellectuals, the artists and the religious deviationists. The spectacle of China gives thus a kind of rigour and perfection to the problem which I summarised above in these terms. Does planning involve dictatorship in the same fashion that hunger in the world involves planning?..... I will only allow myself to suggest some elements of a reply.

1. In the first place, it does not seem to me that dictatorship is demanded by economic techniques as such. One is able to say only that it is a quick solution for the underdeveloped countries placed before the gigantic task of rapidly industrialising themselves. Dictatorship simplifies at the same time the resistances and the means of their execution. By reducing discussion to the minimum. By creating the convergence of wills and the unanimity of conscience, dictatorship gives itself the greatest chance of success. Also an omnipotent state is better able to experiment than another. It is able also to deceive itself without being seriously challenged. It is also able to correct more quickly its errors. That is why this type of state is the major temptation of the underdeveloped countries. It seems to furnish the most simp and efficacious solution for overcoming the handicap of the backward countries in the race for technical equipment, for well-being and for a popular cultural basis. But at what price? Even on the level of efficacity will not the Chine regime swell up endlessly as a bureaucratic state the unwieldiness of which will continue to be accentuated in the future? The peril will be delayed because for the moment the regime requires very much initiative. But the fear of not being in line, the servility and the irresponsibility, will these not be the fruit which poisons dictatorship?

2. If it is not economic technique as such which requires the linking togeth of planning and dictatorship, what is it that brings this about? It seems to me that it is the doctrinaire and authoritarian spirit introduced into socialism by the Marxist-Leninist conception of the state. Certainly planning demands some full powers, but defined and limited power. The existence of some freedom of movement, of discussion, of invention, of creativity is as important to planning as these full powers themselves. In brief, socialism demands a strong state but limited by law. From this arises the question:

On the one hand, have they not reduced too rapidly the liberal conception of the state and the ideal of liberties to a reflex of the bourgeois economy, to a class truth. This liberal conception of the state to which there is attached private security, guarantees and legal recourse for the individual against the abuse of power by the administration and the police, the innocence of the individual as long as his guilt has not been proven, the right to be defended by a lawyer freely chosen, liberty of intellectual and artistic creation, along with the material means of expression which accompanies this liberty. On the other hand, the state itself, is it not too quickly considered as a force in the service of the dominant class which can make use of violence in the interest of the exploited class during the stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat? It is to be feared that this Marxist-Leninist analysis of the state may be too rapid. I give up quickly disassociating the universal significance of "liberties" elaborated in the liberal period and the usage which the bourgeoisie made of them first as a weapon in the conquest of power and then as an alibi in the defensive phase when they retrenched themselves in their "formal" conception of democracy as a means of refusing the change in the structure of property and of the wage system which would have made of these "formal" liberties "real" liberties. Is the competition of political parties a simple reflex of the economic competition of the first capitalist period, then of the struggle of the classes at the time of monopoly capitalism and must it disappear with this competition and this division of society into classes? Perhaps there is an essence of democracy, a universal essence which is discussion. Perhaps there is a human necessity of the same order as breathing, perhaps a regime may not separate itself with impunity from this essence and perhaps it is difficult to return to it once it has departed from it.

As it is seen in China, the question raised here and posed concretely for us by the Chinese regime is the question of the "withering away of the state". The state of the socialist phase is a state which does not cease to strengthen itself and which we have seen must necessarily reinforce itself. But this reinforced state will it not resist with all its inertia its own withering away? To this question, the repeated answer in China was: the question is premature; the socialist state must first create the economic and social conditions of its future "withering away". The question is to know if the authoritarian socialist state can wither away and if it will not be necessary for the communists to kill it once the new political, cultural contradictions engendered by this authoritarian state, even in its very effort to resolve the economic contradictions of capitalism, will have appeared in the full light of history.

Perhaps the question of the structure of the state is never premature; is it not in the beginning of such a political structure that it renders itself perverse and irreformable?

3. Finally, behind all debates on dictatorship I see a debate on the nature of truth. In our group visits to the university, in my personal visit with my colleagues in the history of philosophy in the University of Peking, in all our conversations with the theoreticians of the party, Marxism has been depicted for us as a positive science, an objective knowledge, an absolute and unquestionable truth. The simplified character of this scientism applied to society and to humanity in general makes me acutely uneasy. My uneasiness is increased when I see state power without appeal, sovereign power, assume a philosophy, assume this philosophy and thus close, by a decree of orthodoxy, the discussion

of history, of truth, of the relation of history and truth. That which the state proclaims as a science, is it the true product of human culture? Does the state of human knowledge and the competition concerning the truth permit us to envisage such a result? Is it possible to close the discussion on a question so all-embracing as the universal meaning of our history. I do not believe that this brusque simplifying of the great debate on truth can be either healthy in the present or fruitful for the future. Perhaps the very nature of the problem of truth demands that the state be "sceptical","non-philosophical", and "lay", and that it only use its sovereignty in order to keep open the debate, in order to institutionalise the discussion.

Such are the reasons which make me think that the problem of socialism in the mid twentieth century is to make a synthesis of "planning" - the authoritarian phenomenon - and of "discussion" - the phenomenon of liberty. But it is necessary to confess immediately that we in Western Europe are badly situated to throw back these doubts as criticisms on the Chinese regime. As long as we have not rid ourselves of the abcess of capitalist and colonial exploitation, that is to say, as long as we do not speak from the milieu of another socialism and do not give the real proof that socialism is able to be less dictatorial than the Soviet and Chinese socialism, our plea for a socialist planning associated with a "liberal" politics will remain abstract.

Confronted by China, only another socialist experience would offer a real alternative and not just a verbal alternative to the authoritarian solution of the communist regimes. It must certainly be admitted that we do not see appearing on the horizon this other socialism applicable to the underdeveloped continents, applicable to the hunger of the world and its aspirations for independence, dignity and culture. Must we not say then that authoritarian socialism without a real alternative in the interior of China is really also without an alternative in the rest of Asia, in Africa and in Europe. It seems to me however that there is no necessity to draw this conclusion because the decision about power and truth, about dictatorship and free discussion, does not depend on any logic of history. Dictatorship always remains a choice; at the very most it is a fascination. It is in this way that it resembles necessity. But this necessity is only a fatality into which one throws himself freely.

III.

If the choice is still before us for or against dictatorship, what chance does the Chinese regime offer to draw away from dictatorship? This third question which came to us in China after our reflections on the problems of dictatorship concerns us also here because it is underlying in all our discussions on peaceful co-existence. Peaceful co-existence cannot be durable nor even viable without a certain convergence of systems over a more or less long run. That is to say, if the West does not "socialise" itself and if the East does not "liberalise" itself. While lacking a sure prognosis, is one able perhaps to make a bet based upon an analysis of the real conditions of liberty.

Many of the liberties inscribed in our legal codes remain dead letters because misery both in its physical form of deprivation and in its moral form of exploitation render their exercise illusory. It is just because these liberties are illusory for great masses that they have lost their value in their eyes and their defenders appear as charlatans and hypocrites, camouflaged behind principles lulled by the good conscience which the existence of "free"

elections in their country gives them. If, as is probable, communism brings well-being to the underdeveloped countries, it will have created the most fundamental of the real conditions of democracy.

On the other hand, democracy remains a dead letter if the whole people have not crossed a certain cultural threshhold. But ninety per cent of the Chinese are illiterate; at the end of the first five year plan only twenty-five per cent of school-age children will actually be in school. China is engaged in a gigantic cultural enterprise which is not less spectacular than collectivisation. They are pressing ahead with the basic education of adults by every possible means. A school instructor furnishes two hours of supplementary work, teaching the adults of the village during the rainy season and during the cold weather period. The democratic movement of women on its side is responsible for basic cultural development of the peasants and workers. The trade unions are likewise organising beginning reading classes (and to read the Chinese characters is to learn the ideas of which the characters are the expression). There are also classes for making up secondary school education and thus they send adults to the university capable of carrying on higher studies. The university on its side has similar "make-up" classes. The parks of culture and of rest offer courses and conferences; the museums are equipping themselves for teaching; and finally the theatre, the excellent Chinese theatre, collaborates in the cultural edification of modern China. In all these ways, and the school is only one of the components of this immense effort, China is a vast cultural workshop. In ten years, when the mandarin dialect will be sufficiently widespread and will accompany or replace the various dialects of greater China, the official alphabetisation of the Chinese language will put at the disposition of the people a language more easy to read and to speak. Thus little by little a second concrete condition of democracy is realised. And if, as we have been able to affirm from our visits in the schools, universities, trade unions, parks of culture etc., the cultural policy linked with use of leisure always conserves respect and love of the past tradition, the Chinese will, in the near future, be in a position to discuss and to control the direction of their country's affairs.

Well-being and culture are favourable conditions for the withering away of the state. But in addition, I see a third real condition of democracy taking shape in the new China. Certainly there are not free elections in China in the western sense. The lists of the candidates submitted to the electors have been worked out by the national united front and the proportions worked out between the Communist Party and the other parties have not been submitted to the judgement of the electorate. The electorate has no more access to other sources of information than the offices and press of the state. All that is true. But political democracy can arise on the new basis involving the liberties exercised through administration which the regime is multiplying at every level of society. More than a million cooperatives, which represent many millions of men and women responsible for a little unit, is taking initiative by discussion and decision, of course in the framework of general directives, but nevertheless at their risk and peril. It is absurd to depict as robots such secretaries of cooperatives or of trade unions, these leaders of agricultural teams, these promoters of mass movements. The regime requires intelligence and initiative as much as obedience. The party does not cease to struggle against the spirit of caution and prudence in the form of waiting for directives from above and those who look for shelter and to flee from responsibilities. It is this that I have referred to above as a type of liberty of administration (libertés de caractère gestionnaire).

Our liberties of a western type are endangered to the extent that the professionals of politics are cut off from this popular basis and isolate themselves in an artificial world of party committees, of abstract battles on programmes which are not real political platforms, but dead ideologies. Chinese democracy can have a rebirth in the more or less distant future from this social democratic soil which it is in the process of preparing. From now on this social democracy will have an influence on the political orientation of the regime. The groups with power in working out their decisions have, in order to have their decisions pass, need to involve the multitude of people at the bottom. There is a movement from bottom to top which responds to the authoritarian movement which descends from the top. This influence from the bottom manifests itself in the debates which preceed the elections. It is not sufficient for the national united front to be in agreement on the proportion between the parties of the coalition. It is necessary also to choose candidates capable of bringing the imposing majorities verging on unanimity which the West cheerfully jeers at. But it is overlooked that this seeming unanimity presupposes in all the cooperatives, in trade unions, in district and regional groups, a debate of many months in the course of which there is a certain exchange between the central power and the liberties of administration of which we spoke above. This exchange gives the democracy a certain democratic character, and constitutes a kind of apprenticeship for democratic politics and a kind of preface for liberties which may be no longe solely in the form of an administration but from choice.

Are these conditions sufficient for the political regime of China, as one of the peoples' democracies, to become more liberal some day? Certainly not sufficient, but surely necessary. Not sufficient because the same state which supports well-being and culture and develops certain liberties has the means of orienting well-being and culture in the direction of political slumbe It has the means to confine liberty in the purely administrative tasks and to enclose criticism and self-criticism in a framework of orthodoxy. Everything happens as if the solution of the economic-social contradictions of capitalism in the communist regime would develop new contradictions of a political-cultural type. As Marx has well taught us, the solution is inscribed in the contradiction itself but under the condition of being aware of the contradiction (prise de conscience). Rest assured in any case that it is not military threa and cordons sanitaires which will make this awareness likely, but well-being, culture, the exercise of social democracy, and the apprenticeship of political liberty which the experiment permits - even more, the very struggle of the men there, when they will be in a position to pose really the problem of the withering of the state.

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# Background Information

## FOR CHURCH AND SOCIETY